

HOUSING MANAGEMENT BULLETIN

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VOIGT FIRST HEAD OF MANAGEMENT DIVISION

After careful consideration NAHO's President Colonel Williams, has appointed Raymond A. Voigt to head the Housing Managers' Division of NAHO during its first year. In accordance with the managers' committee report adopted by the Board of Governors last fall (BULLETIN, Vol. I, No. 6) Mr. Voigt becomes responsible for the program and activities of the Division and has power to appoint such other officers and committees as may be necessary. His successor will be elected by members of the Division in accordance with by-laws to be drafted this year and approved by the Division.

Although the job is a big and important one, Mr. Voigt has unusual qualifications for it. A member of NAHO's first management training course, he has been in charge of Parklawn in Milwaukee since before it was opened for occupancy. Faced with a bad combination of the usual and some unusual difficulties, he has given his development the reputation of being one of the best managed in the country.

Although due study and consideration will be given to the Division's problems and possible lines of policy, Mr. Voigt is starting his administration with a bang. He has selected a Committee on Organization and Procedure to act as his cabinet. The Committee is meeting tomorrow, March 4, at NAHO's central office, 1313 East 60th Street, Chicago. To be present at this meeting are Carleton F. Sharpe, Chairman of the Committee and Community Manager of Greenhills, near Cincinnati; Lionel F. Artis, Housing Manager,

Lockefield Garden Apartments, Indianapolis; and Paul L. Stannard, Resident Manager, Cedar-Central Apartments, Cleveland.

The two major subjects on the agenda for Saturday's meeting are the by-laws for the Division and its immediate program, including policy regarding publications, special studies, and possibilities of field work.



Raymond A. Voigt

Invitations will also go out soon for chairmen and members of the following Division committees: publications, training, research and records, meetings, and membership. The next BULLETIN will report on the personnel and start of these committees, as well as on the highlights of Saturday's meeting on organization and procedure.

Mr. Voigt has asked the BULLETIN to assure all managers that he wishes the work of organizing the Division and beginning its program to proceed in the light of the fullest discussion possible among a group so widely separated and so busy as housing managers now are. Letters to him at 4435 West Marion Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, or to NAHO's office will be given every consideration by the proper officers and committees. The columns of the BULLETIN are also open for suggestions, comments, and criticism as the program goes ahead. The Division hopes to have representatives call on many managers during the next few months to stimulate active exchange of ideas. Managers are urged not to delay comments until the time of these field visits, however.

THE BULLETIN WANTS NEWS, IDEAS, REPORTS AND OTHER MATERIAL ON MANAGEMENT
PLEASE SEND TWO COPIES: ONE TO NAHO, ONE TO THE BULLETIN'S EDITORIAL OFFICE

MANAGEMENT ON THE AIR

About a month ago various aspects of housing were aired on the University of Chicago Round Table, the popular discussion program of the National Broadcasting Company, by Robert Vanderpoel, financial editor of the Chicago Evening American, Louis Wirth, Professor of Sociology, and William Spencer, Dean of the School of Business at the University of Chicago. Readers of the BULLETIN will be glad to know that even in a hurry-up survey of housing, management now finds a place:

"MR. SPENCER: There is one aspect of this problem that bothers me. Assuming that the government itself does, by virtue of its credit or otherwise, enter this field and does get a long-run housing program, you then have left the question of the management of these properties and it bothers me somewhat to wonder what is likely to be the type of management that we will have in the future.

"MR. WIRTH: A program for training housing managers was initiated a couple of years ago and we are beginning to get trained, able managers for these housing projects. This will reduce overhead cost, deterioration, vacancies, and other deficiencies to which housing management has in the past been subject.

"MR. SPENCER: I think that in the beginning it is likely you will get fine management. What is likely to be the situation ten or twenty years from now?

"MR. WIRTH: I think there will be sufficient public alertness to see that they are well managed.

"MR. VANDERPOEL: Do you really believe that public managers would be as efficient and thorough as would be those put in by private management?

"MR. WIRTH: I should think if you paid them as much they probably would be and in the end the public housing management group would ultimately influence the private housing management group and thus improve it all the way round."

Publication of Management of Public Housing, a record of NAHO's Management Training Institute, will be announced in the next issue of the BULLETIN.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Mr. Frank C. Lowe resigned recently as Manager of Hillside Homes to take over the resident managership of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company's 12,000 family housing project under construction in the Bronx.

At Dixie Homes in Memphis, an essay contest was conducted a short time ago. One of the subjects, entitled, "Why I Like to Live in Dixie Homes," was limited to residents, while a second topic, "Why I Like the New Housing Program," was open to any citizen in the community. Cash prizes ranging from \$2.50 to \$10.00 were awarded by the management. The local paper featured the prize-winning essay.

What is believed to be the first tenant activity of its kind in the United States was recently inaugurated by tenants of the University Terrace Housing Project in Columbia, South Carolina, writes Mr. William R. Geddings, Manager. A ping pong team of four University Terrace players journeyed to Meeting Street Manor in Charleston, South Carolina to play a team of tenants from that development. Manager Walter Livingston of the Charleston project was host to the visiting team. University Terrace won.

Last summer one of the tenants of the Julia C. Lathrop Homes in Chicago took some motion pictures of activities on the playground and in the social rooms of the project. So much interest was shown in this movie by residents that a hall accommodating 500 persons was later hired for three continuous evenings. The film was supplemented with home talent numbers and proved immensely successful. Motion pictures of community activities at other projects have been shown from time to time.

Mr. Charles J. McMenimen, Manager of New Towne Court in Cambridge, Massachusetts, describes a cooperative effort between the management and the local Board of Health to immunize all children between the ages of six months and six years against diphtheria. The management considered this a vital precautionary measure in view of the fact that diphtheria is reputed to cause more deaths among children between the ages of five and nine than any other disease. A pamphlet entitled, "Protect Them Against Diphtheria," containing a drawing of a little boy and girl at play, was distributed to all mothers at the project.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND TENANT SELECTION

Miss Dorothy I. Cline, Associate Community Relations Counselor, United States Housing Authority, has written a most informative paper on "Aspects of Community Relations and Tenant Selection" in public housing projects. We regret that the article is too long to be printed in full in the BULLETIN. Permission has been granted, however, to publish an abbreviated version, which follows:

"A critical problem facing managers and local housing authorities is the realization that there is a direct tie-up between tenant selection and those phases of management known as community relations.

"Two identifying aspects of this situation emerge which call for more careful review in the future: staff contacts at the time of initial tenant selection; and decisions during initial tenant selection affecting management.

Tenant Selection Contacts

"Every applicant is a prospective tenant of a public housing project even if he is found to be ineligible when he seeks to apply for a home. As a consequence, his first contacts from the time he steps up to the information desk should be such that he would want to move in if he could, and if he does move in will understand the family's and the management's joint responsibilities.

"The applicant forms an impression of the project, the staff, the local authority, and the public service, by the manner in which he is treated and by the information he receives at each of the following points of contact: switchboard and information desk; during the initial interview; at time of visit to dwelling units open for inspection; during home visit; when applicant is notified of acceptance or rejection; at time of leasing; when he moves into the project.

"The importance of first contacts with prospective tenants and others should not be minimized; they have a far-reaching effect on the attitudes developed toward the management of the project. An applicant can be treated in a courteous, friendly, and dignified manner, or the reverse, by well-intentioned, but arbitrary officials. He can receive reliable, satisfactory answers to his anxious questions or be rebuffed and irritated by vague, confusing, inaccurate generalities.

"It is clear, moreover, that the applicant should be put at complete ease; that sufficient time should be allowed for the initial interview. The interviewers should be qualified and should be given authority to inform applicants that they are ineligible. The applicant, in such cases, should be given the specific reasons and should leave the office feeling that he has been accorded fair and courteous treatment.

Community Relationship Problems

"Among the questions which the tenant selection staff must be able to answer are the following:

1. Are there any reasons why a particular family would make living in the project distinctly objectionable to neighbors and other residents in the project?

2. Would the advantages of living in the project help a family overcome any marital or social difficulties which may be attributed, in part at least, to indecent housing or overcrowded conditions?

3. What social, educational and leisure-time activities appear vital to the community life of the tenants -- basic to their experiences and interests?

"If these factors are not given deliberate attention, the manager may have tenants who cannot stay in the project and he is likely to devote an undue proportion of his time and energy to the disposition of management and public relations problems stemming from these sources.

"It follows from this discussion that the training program for the tenant selection staff should include basic information dealing with community relations -- current policies and procedures and broad implications -- with special emphasis on the period of initial tenant selection. There can be little doubt but that a stronger bond needs to exist between the temporary tenant selection staff and the permanent management staff to accomplish these ends.

"Perceptive housing managers who make the most of their experiences will agree that tenant selection and community relations constitute a key stone in the structure of housing management."

NOTES FROM OVERSEAS

The profession of housing management in England was given considerable impetus recently by comments of the Minister of Health concerning a report issued by the Central Housing Advisory Committee. The report, it appears, was a disappointment to "the pessimists. . . . who foresaw that slum clearance would be followed by an outbreak of tenants who keep coals in the bath." It pointed out, at the same time, that municipal housing estates call for careful management and emphasized that many families "have never cooked with a modern grate, nor have they been able to take a bath in a bathroom; a large number have never possessed a garden; and in the big towns their leisure and the playtime of their children is spent in depressing courts and back streets."

The Minister of Health declared that the function of a local authority is "to play the part of the prudent and progressive landlord who will combine efficient management of his estate with the development of its amenities, and the adaptation to their new environment of those tenants for whom it provides an opportunity for a new life in health surroundings."

The Minister also added his opinion to the controversial issue as to whether men or women make better managers. He stated that he had no intention of suggesting the employment of one sex to the exclusion of the other in housing management, but it did not appear to him that "there are any functions involved which cannot adequately be performed by women of the right training and character."

Many American housers, returning from a visit to housing estates in Great Britain, have expressed surprise at the absence of facilities for community life on these developments. This reaction has doubtless

DISTRIBUTION POLICY ON BULLETIN

The HOUSING MANAGEMENT BULLETIN is distributed to members of NAHO who have signified their desire to receive it for a trial period. Copies are available to non-members only by purchase of individual issues at 25¢ each. It is anticipated that the BULLETIN will become shortly the official organ of the Housing Management Division of NAHO, now being organized.

been influenced by the fact that virtually from the start the public housing movement in this country has taken for granted the need for recreational facilities on low-rent housing projects.

Last year at a Conference on Community Activities held in London several addresses were made which called attention to the need for someone or something to bring families together in their new surroundings, that they may develop special interests and hobbies. One speaker commented that "nowhere could a person be so lonely as on a new housing estate."

The movement toward the establishment of community centers for old and young has recently gained momentum in various parts of Great Britain, as evidenced by the fact that pamphlets and articles on community life have been issued by several agencies.

USHA FEDERAL PROJECTS LEASED

Mr. Leon H. Keyserling, Acting Administrator of the United States Housing Authority in the absence of Mr. Straus on his visit to local authorities in the South, has just announced that the Liberty Square project has been leased to the Miami Housing Authority.



Leased to Miami Authority March 1st

Since inheriting late in 1937 the 50 demonstration projects of the PWA Housing Division with the instruction to sell or "divest itself of their management through leases. . . . as soon as practicable," USHA has transferred two projects to the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration and has leased 27 others to local housing authorities.